Histo✕Genes

ERC-2019-SyG 856453

INTEGRATING GENETIC, ARCHAEOLOGICAL & HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES ON EASTERN CENTRAL EUROPE
400-900 AD

Archaeology & Anthropology

HistoGenes **Synergy**

History

Genetics

WHAT ARE WE DOING?

We examine the population change and living conditions in Eastern Central Europe during the critical period between the dissolution of the Western Roman Empire and the emergence of medieval European states from the 5th to the 9th centuries. For the first time, all relevant disciplines are combined in one project: archaeology, history, anthropology and genetics.

HistoGenes is funded by the European Research Council (Synergy Grant nr. 856453);

Duration: 6 years (May 2020 – April 2026)

A UNIQUE PROJECT

- A new perspective at an important stage in European population history
- HistoGenes unites researchers in all the disciplines involved: archaeologists, historians, anthropologists, geneticists, bio-informaticians
- For the first time more than 6,000 graves from the time between AD 400 and 900 are being analysed, using the most advanced genomic, archaeological, historical and anthropological methods
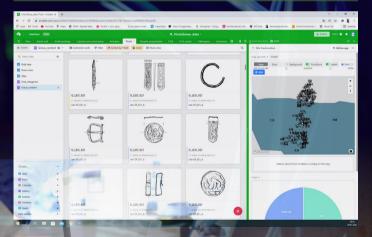- It is to date the largest project in the entire field of ancient DNA research

WHAT IS IT ABOUT?

Eastern Central Europe in the 5th century: The power of the Western Roman Empire is crumbling. For the following centuries written sources report more than a dozen major migrations. Different peoples and powers succeeded each other in the region: Huns, Goths, Avars, Slavs, Franks and others. That was the period known as the Migration Age. Very little is known about these communities: How were the people who lived in the Carpathian basin affected by all the changes? Did ruling groups come and go or did entire populations shift? The HistoGenes project addresses these questions.

ca. 400

Vandals

Alamanni Suebi   Vandals   HUNS

Ostro-   Gepids   Ostrogoths
goths
Alans   Sarmatians

ROMANS

Wisigoths

ROME

CONSTANTINOPLE

PROJECT DATABASE

For the joint interpretation of the data we also rely on the project database which assembles the information collected by HistoGenes: maps of archaeological sites, details about graves and the skeletons, images and descriptions of finds, and overviews of the genetic and isotopic data.

WHO ARE WE?

Four institutions from Austria, Hungary, Germany and the US and more than 25 cooperation partners from Slovenia, Slovakia, the Czech Republic, Poland and Serbia work together in this project

- **INSTITUTE FOR MEDIEVAL RESEARCH** | *Austrian Academy of Sciences, Vienna*
Coordination of the project | Our archaeological team collects data from cemeteries, interprets them and inserts them into our project database.
- **NATURAL HISTORY MUSEUM (NHM)** | *Vienna*
The anthropological team at the Natural History Museum collects data on the skeletons and prepares them for the extraction of the samples.
- **INSTITUTE OF AUSTRIAN HISTORICAL RESEARCH** | *University of Vienna*
Our team of historians at the University of Vienna works on narrative sources from the period.
- **INSTITUTE FOR ARCHAEOLOGICAL SCIENCES** | *Eötvös Loránd University, Budapest*
At the Institute of Archaeological Sciences our team collects and elaborates detailed information about almost 100 sites under study.
- **INSTITUTE OF ARCHAEOGENOMICS** | *Research Centre for the Humanities, Budapest*
The team of geneticists and anthropologists collects, documents and samples skeletal material. Thousands of samples are prepared here and transported for further processing to Leipzig.
- **MAX-PLANCK-INSTITUTE FOR EVOLUTIONARY ANTHROPOLOGY** | *Leipzig*
Genetic information is captured through the prepared samples. In HistoGenes we analyse an unprecedented number of samples from more than 6,000 individuals. This can only be achieved by using robots and computer-clusters.
- **VEERAMAH LABORATORY** | *Stony Brook University, New York*
In New York the Veeramah Laboratory at Stony Brook are helping to make sense of the vast amounts of gained DNA sequence data produced by HistoGenes.
- **INSTITUTE FOR ADVANCED STUDY** | *Princeton, New Jersey*
The Institute for Advanced Study facilitates the ongoing exchange on the interpretation of the manifold new evidence.

OUR AIM

is not only a deeper understanding of migration and mobility in the early Middle Ages, but also an intimate view of the lives of the women and men who moved across or settled in this region. In doing so, we will learn more about their diet, their health, their local and regional customs, and how they structured their families, their communities and their world.